

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM



FOCUS ON FOOD SAFETY



united states department of agriculture
cooperative state research, education,
and extension service



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The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service s (CSREES) Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a unique program that operates in all 50 States and in American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It is designed to assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

EFNEP targets two primary audiences: limited resource youth and limited resource families with young children. In Fiscal Year 1998, EFNEP reached 431,194 youth and 186,009 families; approximately 660,899 family members were indirectly reached through the adult participant.

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IMPACT ON FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION

Food safety education focuses on reducing the incidence of foodborne illness through improving safe food handling practices, improving processes that safeguard the food supply, and improving the understanding of food-related risks. EFNEP plays an integral part in this education.

In one-to-one or group sessions, families are educated in safe food selection and preparation, food sanitation and storage, food preservation, and safe food handling. Based on data from 1998 on 42,265 participants in 39 states, as a result of EFNEP:

- ▶ 58% more often followed the recommended practices of not allowing meat and dairy foods to sit out for more than two hours.
- ▶ 66% showed improvement in one or more of the food safety practices taught (i.e. thawing and storing foods properly).

Youth are reached through clubs, after school or school enrichment programs and other group settings. Based on data from 1998 on 111,735 youth from 4,953 groups, as a result of EFNEP, 46% improved practices in food preparation and safety.

EFNEP Focus on Food Safety highlights some of the food safety education and activities that have been implemented throughout the country through EFNEP.

Additional information about EFNEP, along with other types of education the program provides, can be found at www.reeusda.gov/4h/efnep/home.htm.

ARKANSAS

After participating in 4-H EFNEP for six years and the traditional 4-H program for three years, a high school senior plans to extend her background in 4-H food preservation/safety when she enters college. She has been actively involved in many district and state o rams by participating in food conservation, preservation and safety projects. She has won a scholarship by being named a state record book winner. She plans to start her college studies at the University of Arkansas. She hopes to major in Food Science. The student credits 4-H EFNEP and the traditional 4-H program with helping her gain self confidence and skills in communication which have enabled her to effectively give presentations in front of groups.

ILLINOIS

The power of a fire is devastating. Yet, the power of the University of Illinois Extension Service is far greater. With the help of the Rock Island EFNEP program, one woman changed her life-style for the better. After she and her family lost their home and son to a fire, this EFNEP client moved into the Oak Grove housing project. There she met the EFNEP paraprofessional, who would soon alter her life.

This particular EFNEP client weighed over 200 lbs. She had never been educated about reading food labels or healthy eating habits. In addition, her husband had recently lost his job. Thus, when this woman came to EFNEP, both her economic and emotional status were low. She learned to create a nutrition program that suited her needs. She learned to read the fat and sugar content on food labels

before purchasing certain foods. *She learned about the unsafe practice of leaving dirty dishes and open food out.* The two women together developed an exercise program to suit the EFNEP client's needs.

In the end, this woman eliminated the presence of soda pop and most fatty foods from her diet. She began to exercise and prepare healthier meals for her family. By the time her program with EFNEP was over, the client's weight was down to 190 lbs. Further, this perpetuated an increased level of energy and happiness for the woman. Not only did EFNEP aid this woman's healing process, but more importantly, Extension also helped this woman learn how to further help herself and her family.

New Phoenix Assistant Center services young mothers and children with HIV. A Chicago EFNEP Program Assistant has been able to successfully work with this agency for the past few years. This year, as in the past, the clients of New Phoenix have been able to learn why proper nutrition is vital to their health. *They have also been able to learn why food safety and sanitation is important to prevent them from becoming ill.* Some of the young mothers had very little experience with cooking and using recipes. With the help of EFNEP they learned to make easy, nutritious meals for themselves and their families. The young mothers really enjoyed the food demonstrations and were surprised to know that they could make a lasagna in a skillet.

Hert 1 Child Parent Center provides a structured school-like day-care environment for children ages 3 to 5 on Chicago's south side. The parents of these children participate in educational workshops

at the center. EFNEP provides the nutrition education for some of these workshops. *During the summer the director of the center invited EFNEP to present workshops on food safety for the parents.* They learned about keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold. They also learned the importance of washing fruits and vegetables before cooking and eating.

After the first workshop, one of the young mothers shared that she began to practice the things she learned. She told her class how she was now washing fruit before eating, even bananas and oranges. *She also told them that at her recent family reunion she made sure the food remained safe by packing the cold foods on ice and using a portable heating unit to keep the hot foods hot.*

IOWA

There was a Hepatitis A outbreak in the Des Moines Public Schools. The school board put into effect strict rules forbidding food preparation in classrooms. Much of the 4-H EFNEP curriculum in the primary grades had been focused on food preparation and tasting. *However, the outbreak also provided a teachable moment for food safety practices. The Extension 4-H EFNEP staff developed and used three experiential methods to teach proper hand washing in all classes black light with fluorescent light; cloves and vaseline method to show passage of germs; and comparison to show four components of hand washing.* In addition, food preparation and tasting activities were replaced by activities to encourage youth to be physically active. The staff put together a list of outdoor and indoor games, and equipment to go with them.

As a result, Des Moines Public School teachers and administrators stated they were impressed with ISU Extension's ability to react and adjust to the changed rules in a quick, appropriate, and positive manner. Kids are telling each other to wash their hands again because they haven't done it right. One teacher stated that it now takes kids longer to wash their hands because they are singing the ABC song while they are doing it. Teachers also state that they think the children remember more about what they are learning because they aren't just remembering the food they tasted. In addition, teachers have used the games as physical education classes when the PE teacher has been unavailable. Since the development of this program in Des Moines, a recreation booklet and kit has been developed for ten other counties in Central Iowa.

One EFNEP homemaker used to defrost frozen food on the windowsill, so the food safety lesson was one of the first lessons taught to her. During the lesson, a gallon of milk and hot dogs left over from lunch sat on the kitchen table and a chicken thawed on the windowsill. When the lesson was finished, the homemaker told her daughter, "Hurry, put those things in the fridge." To the Program Assistant, she said, "I did not know that. I learned something new today. I won't do that anymore."

KANSAS

One EFNEP graduate, whose principal language was Spanish, learned food safety from the multilingual EFNEP paraprofessional. The skills he learned allowed him to pass a food safety test given in English by the local health department. This accomplishment enabled him to get a better job.

MINNESOTA

After hearing a lesson on hand washing, a group of sixth-grade boys in Cluster 11 took matters into their own hands and notified a school superintendent about the conditions in their bathroom. As part of her lesson, the Nutrition Education Assistant (NEA) explained to the sixth graders the need for warm water, soap, and twenty seconds of scrubbing. She then put Glo-Germ on their hands and sent them to the bathrooms to wash their hands. When they returned, the NEA checked their hands. The girls' hands were fine but all the boys had a lot of Glo-Germ on their hands. "Did you wash your hands with soap?" she asked. "Yes," they replied. "Did you use warm water?" she asked.

"No," the boys answered. "All we have in our bathroom is cold water." The teacher sent them up to the next floor where the boys' bathroom did have warm water.

When they returned, there was a tremendous change, and only a few had trouble spots where Glo-Germ remained. That made the boys upset. If warm water made that much difference, they felt they should have it in their bathroom, too. The NEA encouraged them to speak to the Superintendent about it. After class, the NEA went to the Superintendent and explained, "I just taught a class of sixth graders the techniques of hand washing, and some of the boys will be coming to see you about getting warm water in their bathroom. Warm water will make a big difference in the spread of sickness; it's important to have warm water to kill those germs." Several months after the boys visited the superintendent, all of the school's bathrooms had warm water.

NEBRASKA

Nutrition education classes are an important part of moving families toward self-sufficiency. Lancaster County EFNEP provided education for 239 non-English speaking families, including 99 Hispanic families. One-hundred thirty-six have graduated from the program. Cultural groups include Hispanic, Bosnian, Iraqi, Vietnamese, Cuban, Sudanese and the former Soviet Union. The Hispanic group found out that you don't have to fry all the typical foods. Some foods can be baked in the oven, non-stick pans can be used or spray oils. Soup stock, instead of oil can provide moisture for refried beans. Many of the Bosnian and Croatian families have learned to use a shopping list and to shop only once a week. They were used to going to the market daily. A Bosnian family had a concern about sell-by dates on products. They had gone to the supermarket and purchased meat which would expire that day. It was explained that the meat could be frozen and used later. Russian clients thought that skinless breast of chicken was old and that the grocery stores needed to sell it quickly. They didn't understand that the skin was removed to reduce fat. *Vietnamese clients often don't realize the importance of refrigerating eggs because they used to receive fresh eggs daily. They now refrigerate eggs.* The EFNEP staff have become a valuable part of the CSS refugee basic orientation. Refugees need to know how to shop in grocery stores to access food economically. They need to know that nutrition plays an important part in a healthy body. *They also need to understand how to prepare food properly so they don't run the risk of becoming sick because it wasn't handled safely.* EFNEP staff have provided this education for refugees.

Emergency Protective Services (EPS) shelter, in Hastings is a shelter home for at-risk youth who have been taken out of their own home. This Shelter is funded by United Way. It serves infants through age 21. Their period of stay can be up to three months. The EPS director was approached about EFNEP's desire to work with a youth group there. It had been stated that not a lot of other organizations had much success, or follow through.

EFNEP started EPS with an after school youth group, ages 7 - 18, for one hour twice a month. Personalities varied, and resistance felt at times, but this group is very much worth all the efforts EFNEP can provide. *The lesson topics have included food safety (germs, proper food handling and storage), food preparation (measuring liquid and dry ingredients properly), snacks, exercise, breakfast, Food Guide Pyramid, and fast foods.* Visuals are used (as learning tools), food models, games, videos, measuring utensils, recipes, and activity handouts. At each meeting a recipe is prepared by the youth themselves. This recipe serves as their evening snack. The cook at the shelter is given the chosen recipe and list of ingredients needed ahead of time and includes them in her grocery shopping. Sometimes the youth help her shop to select items. The cost of all ingredients are paid by EPS. A rewarding experience was when one 15 year old boy who hadn't particularly participated in the lesson exclaimed (when it came time to wash hands and do food preparation and all of the others had gone into the kitchen), "Oh well, I guess I'll go do it too." He ended up helping and enjoying what he did. Or an eight year old boy trying to measure accurately and then looking obviously pleased when hearing, "You really did a good job." The group varies each

meeting, but most often has pulled together as a team to learn and do. The EPS staff is helpful and usually participates with EFNEP. The EPS activities director and NEP staff feel this is going well, and with both program's efforts, are continuing with future plans for youth meetings.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

One hundred ninety-four (194) families increased their ability to manage food budgets by 95% by participating in Planning Ahead, Staying Ahead, (PASA) a family resource management and food and nutrition program during the last program year. *The food and nutrition lessons cover: food safety; the food guide pyramid; increased use of fruits, vegetables and better use of protein foods; unit pricing and shopping skills; and planning menus within a food stamp allotment.* Materials included the development of educational objectives, lesson outlines for presentation, participant handouts, flip chart pages for presentation, and an evaluation of lessons. A workbook was developed along with an instructor's manual.

Another method used to reach low-income clients, especially in rural areas, is through a home-study course. During this program year, more than 60 participants successfully completed a nutrition correspondence course and received a certificate of completion. *Six lessons in length, this home study course contains lessons on food safety, label reading, menu planning, food purchase, and making healthy food choices.* A combination of home visits, telephone contacts, and home studies with the EFNEP Program Associate provides needed support and encouragement for this

educational intervention. Evaluation results reveal an average pre-knowledge test score of 81% and post-knowledge test score of 92%. Diet recalls show little change between pre and post, and may indicate that the intervention needs more personal contact or time. An interesting note: all home study participants requested more information and materials each time they completed a lesson, showing that perhaps home study can start a positive relationship between low-income clients and Cooperative Extension. Another educational strategy tested was nutrition education videos. Four ten-minute nutrition education videos were produced and set up on a repeating video tape. These videos were played at District Offices in two pilot sites. Accompanying pamphlets with evaluation cards have been developed to emphasize the concepts brought forth in the videos. Participants are referred to the 1-800-FOOD LINE number for more information.

OHIO

A Toledo mother of seven was evicted from her subsidized housing because of poor sanitation. She improved her sanitation skills and food safety knowledge by attending EFNEP classes at *the homeless shelter*. As a result, she was eligible to return to subsidized housing, and recently passed her six-month housing inspection.

Indochinese refugees in Columbus, face difficulties buying, storing and preparing food for their families. Many were farmers in their countries, and did not have electric or gas stoves, refrigerators and freezers, and modern grocery stores. Most had never heard of nutrition. *They never thought about food safety or storage because they only bought or harvested what they needed to eat each day.*

Now that they are living in a large metropolitan area they need to learn to buy, store, and prepare food to keep their families healthy. Two Asian EFNEP Educators, have stepped in to help. One of the homemakers came to EFNEP as a new refugee. She did not speak or read English and did not know how to purchase or prepare foods for her family. She received welfare and food stamps but often did not have money or food left at the end of the month. Her children were not healthy and required many visits to the doctor. The EFNEP Educator worked with her and her family for almost a year. *She taught her how to shop economically in American grocery stores, how to store food safely and how to cook healthy nutritious meals for her family.* Since that time, the homemaker has attended school and learned to read, write, and speak English. She has continued to follow the guidelines taught by her EFNEP Educator, and her children are healthy and rarely require medical care. Now she feels she has more to learn and has volunteered her home as a classroom. She has become the EFNEP Educator's star pupil and can share her success with others.

SOUTH DAKOTA

A family in subsidized housing was on the verge of becoming homeless because of their lack of care for their apartment. The building manager contacted the local Extension office to help the family. *EFNEP was suggested because its emphasis on food preparation and food safety could be associated with household cleanliness.* The father agreed to take the classes with the understanding that the family's right to remain would be determined by the condition of the apartment at program completion. Not only did the residence pass inspection, but the

father was pleased he had been able to fit the classes into his spare time, had lost some weight, and had learned skills to better feed his children.

TEXAS

In Texas, kids in the kitchen, a five-week teen leadership development program uses a nutrition and health focus to boost the middle school students' self-esteem; encourage experiential (hands-on) education that reinforces academic skills; cooperative learning; mentoring; and peer leadership. Simultaneously, elementary school students learn that nutrition is important to how they look, feel and act. *They learn the nutritional needs for their age group, food safety, food preparation, and explore new foods - and they have fun doing it!* Of the 293 youth surveyed, 62% correctly named the Food Guide Pyramid's food groups. Sixty-one percent (61%) recognized the need to maintain well-balanced diets with regular exercise. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the students also prepared EFNEP youth recipes at home following the lessons. The youngsters were asked to rate what they considered to be the most important information learned from this special lesson series. These topics are: What foods to eat and why (68%), keeping food safe and clean (15%), Nutritious snack ideas (9%), Cooking (5%), and Kitchen Safety (3%).

UTAH

At the Summer Craze Summer School Program, seven Professor Popcorn lessons plus an additional lesson on food safety were taught over a period of four weeks. One hundred nineteen (119)

children were divided into three groups and ranged from 8 through 14 years of age. The classes were divided into three levels, I, II, and III, and were presented according to the ages of each group. A wide variety of topics were covered, including the Food Guide Pyramid; proper food choices and number of servings and amounts in a serving; how to read food labels; recognize sources of excess dietary fat, sugar, and salt; and the foods' tendencies toward addictions. The students did hands-on experiments and prepared their own snacks which were geared toward healthy, low-fat, low sugar selections that included fruit salad, popcorn, vegetables and dips, and creations of creatures made of their choice of fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc. At the end of the month, the students received packets containing copies of all of the games, recipes and resource material covered during the course.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Twenty-two teens participated in the annual EFNEP Summer Teen Program. *The program provided for planning meals, buying, preparing, handling and storage of foods.* Video presentations, dietary handouts, recipe adaptations, and field trips rounded out the *Eating Right is Basic II* curriculum.

In cooperation with a local junior high school in the Virgin Islands, concepts in basic nutrition and food safety were taught and demonstrated to 13 students. A visit to the Home Economics laboratory reinforced the concepts taught in the classroom. A closing ceremony was held where the students displayed what they learned. One display focused on healthier snack choices and another was a food safety chart.

WASHINGTON

EFNEP Supervising Agents participated in a discussion of the possible impacts of welfare reform on EFNEP families. Increased emphasis was placed on wise use of food resources. Food recovery was an important aspect of EFNEP programming in Pierce County and an EFNEP-affiliated gleaning program recovered 237,000 pounds of produce; 80% of the produce was delivered to a local emergency feeding site and 20% went to the gleaners who used some of it for their own family and distributed the rest to other low-income families. *Additionally, the gleaning program provided information on food safety and nutrition.*

WISCONSIN

In Wisconsin, the theme for the summer program was Mission: Nutrition and it focused primarily on food safety. There were five lessons for a week-long program: hand washing, food spoilage, proper food storage, safe food handling, and cleanliness. Each lesson began with a mission for the youth to solve before the end of class. Activities were hands-on and varied depending upon age. The program reached over 632 youth with ages ranging from 2 through 16. In most cases pre- and post-evaluations were done in order to view progress made in learning concepts. Because of the broad age range, there are two levels of activities that took place. The program continues to employ teens who are trained to provide leadership and direction for youth in both the nutrition and garden programs. As expected, the majority of youth increased scores from pre- to post-test.

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